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Tuesday, March 26, 1929.

Housekeepers' Chats

Not for publication

Subject: "How to Make Biscuits." From Bureau of Home Economics, U. S. D. A.

Bulletin available: "Home Baking."

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"What do you know, that's new and interesting?" asked my Next-Door Neighbor, settling herself on my plum-colored davenport.

"Not a thing. I'm preparing a radio talk about biscuits. Have you anything to contribute?"

"Perhaps," said my neighbor. "You might say that more men have been enticed into marriage, by means of melt-in-your-mouth biscuits, than by any other means."

"Is that so?" I asked. "Can you prove it?"

"Well, not exactly. No one has ever done exhaustive research on the subject. By the way, Aunt Sammy, I heard something interesting on the radio the other night, about an unrepealed law of France, enacted during the reign of the French ruler who held the throne of France in 1770, almost 160 years ago. This law read as follows:

"'Anyone who entices into marriage a male subject of His Majesty by means of rouge, or scent (meaning perfume), or artificial teeth, or false hair, shoes with high heels, or crinolines, will be prosecuted for fraud, and the marriage declared null and void.' Isn't that interesting?"

"Interesting," I agreed, "but it doesn't have anything to do with biscuits. How did you make those cheese biscuits you served for Sunday supper, with salad?"

"Oh, those," said my Neighbor. "Why, I added four or five tablespoons of grated cheese along with the fat, when I made biscuits. I often serve cheese biscuits for luncheon or supper, when salad is the main course. Tell you what let's do, Aunt Sammy; let's make a list of the different ways to vary an ordinary biscuit recipe. I'll help you. Begin with your standard recipe for baking powder biscuits."

With the cooperation of my neighbor, I made a list of ways to vary a recipe for baking powder biscuits. If you have notebooks and pencils handy, we'll lose no time in writing recipes. First, I'll tell you how to make biscuits, and then I'll describe the variations.



Five ingredients, for Baking Powder Biscuits:

3 cups sifted soft-wheat flour  
1 teaspoon salt  
4 teaspoons baking powder  
4 to 6 tablespoons shortening, and  
1 cup milk, or enough to make a soft dough

Let's repeat the five ingredients, for Baking Powder Biscuits: (Repeat).

Mix and sift the flour, salt, and baking powder. Cut in the shortening with a biscuit cutter, or a knife, or rub in lightly with finger-tips. Add the milk gradually, using just enough to make a soft dough. Toss the dough out on a lightly floured board, press it out with the palm of your hand, to about half an inch thickness. When you cut the biscuits, don't forget to dip the biscuit cutter in flour each time, so you'll have a clean surface.

Bake the biscuits in a quick oven -- 400 to 450 degrees Fahrenheit, if you use a thermometer. If the oven is too hot, the biscuits will have a hard crust on the outside, and be too soft on the inside.

Just keep your pencils, please, while I give you these easy-to-make variations:

Number One -- Twin Biscuits. These are nice with dainty afternoon tea refreshments. Cut the biscuits very small, not more than an inch in diameter. The inside piece of a doughnut cutter is about right. Moisten the top of each biscuit, lightly, with butter or with cream, place another biscuit on top, press down lightly and bake.

Number Two -- Drop Biscuits. Add enough extra liquid to make a drop batter. Drop by tablespoons, on a greased pan.

Number Three -- Cheese Biscuits. Add four or five tablespoons of grated, tasty American cheese, when you add the fat.

Number Four -- Nut Biscuits. Add chopped nuts when you add the fat.

Number Five -- Raisin Biscuits. Add chopped raisins to the flour mixture.

Next, we come to the desserts which can be made of biscuit dough: Coffee Cake, Short Cake, and Fruit Cobbler. The recipe for Coffee Cake is in the Radio Cookbook, on page 70, so we'll consider Short Cake next.

For Short Cakes, follow the directions for Baking Powder Biscuits, adding one or two tablespoons of sugar to the flour mixture, and one or two extra tablespoons of shortening. Bake in a big round cake, or as individual servings. If the latter, cut with a large biscuit cutter. While hot, split and butter. Place sweetened crushed fruit between and on top.



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To make Fruit Cobbler, roll the dough fairly thin -- about a fourth of an inch, and with it line a square or oblong pan. Place sweetened fruit in an even layer over the dough, and bake till the crust is brown.

There are two questions to answer today.

First question: "Please tell me how to garnish cold meats, attractively."

Answer: Cut the meat into thin slices and arrange it in neat rows on the platter. Garnish with strips of dill pickle, or bits of parsley, or watercress, or celery tops. For Sunday night suppers I often serve sliced chicken and cold sliced ham together on a platter, so that slices of both can be lifted together. Another standby in our family is slices of cold sliced ham, arranged around a potato salad.

Second question: "What is the proper way to serve a lemon garnish, with fish?"

Answer: Instead of placing the slices of lemon on the platter with the fish, where they become greasy, cut the lemon lengthwise, into six or eight sections, and pass them on a separate plate. Then one can squeeze the juice from the lemon without getting his fingers greasy. If you want the sections of lemon to be especially "stylish and becoming," roll them in finely chopped parsley. Or you might prefer to sprinkle the parsley directly on the fish.

We might mention beefsteak and chops, while we're on the subject. Tasty vegetables to serve on the platter with beefsteak, around the meat, are fried potatoes, browned mushrooms, fried tomatoes, or fried onions. Lamb chops are attractive when arranged on a hot platter, around a mound of green peas, or buttered carrots, or lightly piled mashed potatoes.

With pork chops, serve apple rings, or jellied apples colored red. Of course there's nothing better than cream gravy, poured over the pork chops when they are placed on the platter. Suitable green garnishes for meat are watercress, parsley, and celery tops. Use only enough to give a touch of color. Too much garnish of any kind makes a dish look sort of self-conscious and uncomfortable.

Tomorrow: "A Home-Made Furniture Polish." Program includes menu and recipe.

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